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Bay Area Air Quality Management District  
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## Joint Policy Committee/Regional Planning Program

Date: March 6, 2006

To: Joint Policy Committee

From: Regional Planning Program Director

Subject: Amended Smart-Growth Preamble and Policies—Policy on Economic Activity and Goods Distribution

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At its meeting of January 19, 2007, the JPC endorsed all but one of a set of proposed amendments to the Bay Area's Smart-Growth Preamble and Policies. At the urging of a representative of the City of Oakland, a clarifying report back was requested on one proposed new policy:

### **Economic Activity and Goods Distribution**

Encourage planning and development that respects the public and private infrastructure required for the maintenance of a prosperous regional economy and for the efficient provision and distribution of goods and services.

This memo provides information on the rationale and intent of the proposed policy.

### Rationale

The *Smart Growth Strategy / Regional Livability Footprint Project* was started at a time when the Bay Area economy was booming, and it is likely that the impact of the dot-com bust had not fully sunk in when the *Project* wound down in 2002. For whatever reason, economic development issues do not enjoy high standing in either the *Project's* final report or in the *Preamble and Policies* adopted in late 2002. Since 2002, the region's goods movement study and some local planning exercises have pointed to potential land-use competition between "smart" residential development and goods-distribution facilities. Our transit-oriented development work has also highlighted possible conflicts between proposed residential densities and established industrial activities; and there has been a general concern about residential development foreclosing opportunities for job generators. A policy sensitive to these economic concerns is appropriate.

### Intent

The policy is intended to be read not in isolation, but in the context of the Bay Area's entire *Smart-Growth Preamble and Policies*, as amended and attached to this memo. In that context, it is clear that smart growth involves balance and trade-off among a number of complementary and occasionally conflicting objectives. The Economic Activity and Goods Distribution policy is intended to add another consideration to the many which the region needs to take into account as it continues to grow and develop. It is not intended to be any more important or over-riding than

any of the other smart-growth policies. All the policies are about general direction; they are not about hard and fast rules.

Further, with one limited exception, BCDC, the regional agencies that have adopted the *Smart-Growth Preamble and Policies* have no formal land-use authority. Except for BCDC's one-hundred-foot doughnut of Bay shoreline, land-use planning remains the domain of local governments. Regional agencies can advise and provide incentives, but they cannot dictate.

For the most part, the original policies seem to have been drafted to be deliberately vague, and the proposed amendments do not venture far from that precedent. The informal, positive nature of the regional agency intent is also implied by the action verbs used to articulate the policies. The policies use words like "encourage," "promote," "improve" and "enhance. They do not use words like "prohibit" or "restrict," and they do not make absolute choices among alternatives.

In sum, the policies have all the mild manners of a Clark Kent and none of the powers of a Superman. For that reason, it is not surprising that, after review, staff at the City of Oakland have indicated that they have no problems with the proposed policy as presently worded.

#### Recommendation

I RECOMMEND:

THAT the JPC endorse the proposed policy on Economic Activity and Goods Distribution.

## ***Attachment B***

### **SMART-GROWTH PREAMBLE AND POLICIES (AS AMENDED)**

#### **Preamble**

Current land-use patterns in the San Francisco Bay Area are putting intense pressure on the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the Bay Area and of surrounding regions. The projected addition of over one million new residents and one million new jobs in the coming decades will further challenge our ability to sustain the high quality of life we enjoy today.

To help meet this challenge, the five regional agencies of the Bay Region—the Association of Bay Area Governments, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Regional Water Quality Control Board—along with the economy, environment and social equity caucuses of the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities, developed a set of Smart Growth policies.

The policies reflect the values articulated by workshop participants of the Smart Growth Strategy/Regional Livability Footprint Project and address Bay Area conditions. The policies are consistent with widely accepted notions of smart growth. They are meant to encourage meaningful participation from local governments, stakeholders and residents.

The policies provide a framework for decision-making on development patterns, housing, transportation, environment, infrastructure, governmental fiscal health and social equity that can lead us toward development of vibrant neighborhoods, preservation of open space, clean air and water, and enhanced mobility choices, while enhancing the Bay Area's relationship with surrounding regions.

#### **Policies**

##### **Jobs/Housing Balance and Match**

Improve the jobs/housing linkages through the development of housing in proximity to jobs, and both in proximity to public transportation. Increase the supply of affordable housing and support efforts to match job income and housing affordability levels.

##### **Housing and Displacement**

Improve existing housing and develop sufficient new housing to provide for the housing needs of the Bay Area community. Support efforts to improve housing affordability and limit the displacement of existing residents and businesses.

##### **Social Justice and Equity**

Improve conditions in disadvantaged neighborhoods, ensure environmental justice, and improve access to jobs, housing, public services and good schools for all residents in the region.

##### **Health and Safety**

Promote and protect public health and safety by locating and designing development with sensitivity to natural and man-made risks, by reducing these risks where appropriate and feasible, and by facilitating healthy and safe behaviors.

**Environmental, Natural Resource, Open Space and Agricultural Preservation**

Protect and enhance open space, agricultural lands, other valued lands, watersheds and ecosystems throughout the region. Promote development patterns and building technologies that protect and improve air quality, conserve resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Protect and enhance the San Francisco Bay and Estuary. Protect scenic, historic, and cultural resources that contribute to the region's identity.

**Future Urban Development**

Anticipate and prepare for future urban expansion by discouraging the premature subdivision of agricultural and vacant land for low-density residential development that cannot be efficiently served by transit, which does not provide for the complete range of infrastructure, uses and services required to meet the daily needs of residents and which is located without regard to proximate employment opportunities.

**Economic Activity and Goods Distribution**

Encourage planning and development that respects the public and private infrastructure required for the maintenance of a prosperous regional economy and for the efficient provision and distribution of goods and services.

**Mobility, Livability and Transit Support**

Enhance community livability by promoting infill, transit oriented and walkable communities, and compact development as appropriate. Develop multi-family housing, mixed-use development, and alternative transportation to improve opportunities for all members of the community.

**Local and Regional Transportation Efficiencies**

Promote opportunities for transit use and alternative modes of transportation including improved rail, bus, high occupancy (HOV) systems, and ferry services as well as enhanced walking and biking. Increase connectivity between and strengthen alternative modes of transportation, including improved rail, bus, ride share and ferry services as well as walking and biking. Promote investments that adequately maintain the existing transportation system and improve the efficiency of transportation infrastructure.

**Infrastructure Investments**

Improve and maintain existing infrastructure and support future investments that promote smart growth, including water and land recycling, brownfield clean-up and re-use, multi-use facilities, smart building codes, green building principles, retention of historic character and resources, and provision of high-quality school capacity.

**Local Government Fiscal Health**

Improve the fiscal health of local government by promoting stable and secure revenue sources, reduced service provision costs through smart growth targeted infrastructure improvement, and state and regional sponsored fiscal incentives. Support cooperative efforts among local jurisdictions to address housing and commercial development, infrastructure costs, and provision of services.

**Cooperation on Smart Growth Policies**

Encourage the State, local governments, water and sewer districts, school districts, stakeholders and other constituents in the Bay Area to cooperate in supporting actions consistent with the adopted Smart Growth policies. Forge cooperative relationships with governments and stakeholders in surrounding regions to support actions that will lead to inter-regional Smart Growth benefits.